

WHAT IS CLAIMED IS:

1 1. A method for processing a financial instrument, the method
2 comprising:
3 receiving an electronic package defining an image of the financial instrument
4 at a first institution from a presenter, the image having been generated as part of a transaction
5 at a point of sale; and
6 crediting the presenter for funds in accordance with the financial instrument.

1 2. The method recited in claim 1 wherein the electronic package
2 comprises the image.

1 3. The method recited in claim 1 wherein the image is stored at a location
2 within a depository and the electronic package comprises a reference to the location.

1 4. The method recited in claim 1 wherein the first institution comprises a
2 financial institution.

1 5. The method recited in claim 4 wherein the first institution comprises a
2 bank.

1 6. The method recited in claim 1 further comprising transmitting the
2 electronic package to a second institution for recovery of the funds.

1 7. The method recited in claim 6 wherein the second institution comprises
2 a clearing institution.

1 8. The method recited in claim 7 wherein the clearing institution
2 comprises a reserve institution.

1 9. The method recited in claim 6 wherein the second institution comprises
2 a drawee financial institution, the method further comprising identifying the drawee financial
3 institution from the electronic package.

1 10. The method recited in claim 9 wherein the first institution comprises a
2 clearing institution.

1 11. The method recited in claim 6 wherein crediting the presenter
2 comprises provisionally crediting an account of the presenter, the method further comprising
3 releasing the credited funds after recovery of the funds.

1 12. The method recited in claim 1 wherein the first institution comprises a
2 drawee financial institution identified by the financial instrument.

1 13. The method recited in claim 12 wherein the presenter comprises a
2 clearing institution.

1 14. The method recited in claim 1 wherein the image is encrypted, the
2 method further comprising decrypting the image.

1 15. The method recited in claim 1 wherein the financial instrument
2 comprises a check.

1 16. The method recited in claim 1 wherein the financial instrument
2 comprises a credit-card sales slip.

1 17. A method for processing a financial instrument, the method
2 comprising:
3 generating an image of the financial instrument as part of a transaction at a
4 point of sale; and
5 transmitting an electronic package defining the image of the financial
6 instrument to an institution for recovery of funds in accordance with the financial instrument.

1 18. The method recited in claim 17 further comprising transmitting the
2 image to a depository for storage.

1 19. The method recited in claim 17 wherein the electronic package
2 comprises the image.

1 20. The method recited in claim 17 wherein the image is stored at a
2 location within a depository and the electronic package comprises a reference to the location

1 21. The method recited in claim 17 wherein the institution comprises a
2 financial institution.

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1 22. The method recited in claim 21 wherein the first institution comprises
2 a bank.

1 23. The method recited in claim 17 wherein the financial instrument
2 comprises a check.

1 24. A method for processing a financial instrument, the method
2 comprising:

3 receiving a reference to a location in a depository where an image of the
4 financial instrument is stored; and

5 crediting the presenter of the reference with funds in accordance with the
6 financial instrument.

1 25. The method recited in claim 24 further comprising transmitting the
2 reference an institution for recovery of the funds.

1 26. The method recited in claim 25 wherein the institution comprises a
2 financial institution.

1 27. The method recited in claim 25 wherein the institution comprises a
2 clearing institution.

1 28. The method recited in claim 24 wherein the financial instrument
2 comprises a check.

1 29. The method recited in claim 24 wherein the financial instrument
2 comprises a credit-card sales slip.

1 30. A computer-readable storage medium having a computer-readable
2 program embodied therein for directing operation of a computer system for a first institution,
3 the computer system including a communications system, a processor, and a storage device,
4 wherein the computer-readable program includes instructions for operating the computer
5 system to process a financial instrument in accordance with the following:

6 receiving an electronic package defining an image of the financial instrument
7 from a presenter with the communications system, the image having been generated as part of
8 a transaction at a point of sale; and

9 crediting an account of the presenter for funds in accordance with the financial
10 instrument.

1 31. The computer-readable storage medium recited in claim 30 wherein
2 the computer-readable program further includes instructions for operating the computer
3 system for transmitting the electronic package to a second institution for recovery of the
4 funds.

1 32. The computer-readable storage medium recited in claim 30 wherein
2 the image is stored at a location within a depository and the electronic package comprises a
3 reference to the location, the computer-readable program further including instructions for
4 retrieving the image from the location.

1 33. The computer-readable storage medium recited in claim 30 wherein
2 the financial instrument comprises a check.

1 34. A computer system comprising:
2 a communications system;
3 a storage device;
4 a processor in communication with the communications system and the
5 storage device; and
6 a memory coupled with the processor, the memory comprising a computer-
7 readable storage medium having a computer-readable program embodied therein for directing
8 operation of the computer system to process a financial instrument, the computer-readable
9 program including:
10 instructions for receiving an electronic package defining an image of
11 the financial instrument from a presenter with the communications system, the image having
12 been generated as part of a transaction at a point of sale; and
13 instructions for crediting the presenter for funds in accordance with the
14 financial instrument.

1 35. The computer system recited in claim 34 wherein the computer-
2 readable program further includes instructions for transmitting the image of the financial
3 instrument to a second institution for recovery of the funds.

1 36. The computer system recited in claim 34 wherein the image is stored at
2 a location within a depository and the electronic package comprises a reference to the
3 location, the computer-readable program further including instructions for retrieving the
4 image from the location.

1 37. The computer system recited in claim 34 wherein the communications
2 system is adapted for connection with the Internet.

1 38. The computer system recited in claim 34 wherein the financial
2 instrument comprises a check.